BOOK REVIEW

Selection of books for review is based on the editor's opinions regarding possible reader interest and on the availability of the book to the editor. Occasional selections may include books on topics somewhat peripheral to the subject matter ordinarily considered acceptable.

U.S. Energy Policy: Crisis and Complacency

Authors	D. E. Kash and R. W. Rycroft
Publisher	University of Oklahoma Press
Pages	313
Price	$19.95
Reviewer	Allan T. Mense

The authors' stated mission is to analyze the nation's recent energy history and actions taken to formulate a national energy policy. This they do with an eye heavy toward policy and light toward science/engineering and technology. They then formulate a series of 20 recommendations that they believe must be implemented to provide a stable energy future for the United States.

The authors discuss the recent energy problem by reviewing energy policy, technologies, and resources during three time frames: prior to 1973 (the Arab oil embargo), from 1973 through 1980, and from 1980 to present (circa 1983). They contend that prior to 1973 the nation did not have a single "consensus" energy policy but instead had a group of separate fuel policies (oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear, electricity). These policies and government controls, imposed without an understanding of resource limitations, caused the chaos after the 1973 oil embargo.

The period from 1973 to 1980 saw the formulation of the rudiments of a unified national consensus on (a) the need for energy, (b) paths toward development of new sources and conservation measures, and (c) regulatory agencies required for control of energy. This consensus provided the United States with the rudiments of a stable national energy policy.

Upon the Reagan administration taking office (1980 to present), that national policy structure was dismantled and replaced only with the words "let the marketplace do it." The authors contend that "by turning the management of energy over to the marketplace, the Reagan administration has put the nation at risk . . . ." They note, and correctly so, that a need exists for a set of policy guidelines (that are derived by consensus of the actors in the energy arena). This consensus policy and guidelines are needed to provide dependable, clearly defined conditions under which the marketplace is allowed to operate. The use of public policy for that purpose is the traditional (and proven stable) pattern in the United States. The authors contend that a secure energy future makes it imperative that the nation return to that pattern as quickly as possible.

In this reviewer's opinion, the authors were successful in briefly reviewing the history and forces that have come to play in the energy debate. The book is technically weak in its assessment of the readiness of various energy alternatives, but it errs on the side of conservatism. The authors assume a source to be potentially available, instead of actually available, if they were able to uncover, in their research, any argument whatsoever amongst the technical community on a given energy resource or conservation measure.

The book leans heavily toward oil and natural gas as befits a book published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Nuclear fission is basically given short shrift and the authors apparently still believe that nuclear waste disposal has major technical questions surrounding its implementation. Most close viewers of the nuclear debate know that the radwaste issue has been hung up by politicians in an attempt to "constipate" the present nuclear energy business and close it down and that several viable technologically proven solutions exist.

For those not familiar with the breadth of the energy arena nor the depth of the political issues at stake, the book does a fine job of reviewing the former.

The authors' recommendations read like a wish list composed by the Carter White House (the authors advocate terminating the Clinch River Breeder Reactor!) and for whatever reason patronizingly grant (Recommendation 17) that "the present fusion research and development program should be sustained."

For the reader of *Fusion Technology*, the book gives a broad brush picture of the real energy arena. It is reasonably easy reading but does cover a lot of ground that can cause the reader to lose track of the authors' primary mission. It is a useful secondary resource.

Allan T. Mense is currently a senior scientist with the fusion science department, McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company (MDAC) and adjunct professor of physics at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Prior to joining MDAC, Mense spent several years on the staff of the Science and Technology Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, where much of this energy debate took place. Mense also has worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and, prior to that, received his PhD in nuclear engineering from the University of Wisonsin-Madison.